

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 105164

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 11336 ACTION SECSTATE DATED APR 21:

QTE:C O N F I D E I A L CAIRO 11336

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: SNAR, EG

SUBJECT: OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION DA - EGYPT

REF: STATE 932

1. FOLLOWING PARAS PROVIDE SUCH INFO AS WE HAVE ON OPIUM POPPY
CULTIVATION IN EGYPT.

2. THERE IS NO RPT NO LICIT OPIUM CULTIVATION IN EGYPT. ILLICIT
OPIUM CULTIVATION HAS TO SOME EXTENT BEEN TRADITIONAL IN UPPER EGYPT
AND ESPECIALLY IN THE ASSIUT AREA, APPROXIMATELY 275 MILES SOUTH OF
CAIRO. IN VIEW OF THE ILLICIT NATURE OF SUCH PLANTING, PATCHES ARE
DISPERSED AND THE POPPY IS PLANTED IN FIELDS OF INDIGENDUS CROPS; I.E

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COTTON, SUGAR CANE, ETC. EGYPTIAN ANTI-NARCOTICS GENERAL ADMINISTRA-
TION (ANGA) ESTIMATES THAT LAST YEAR APPROXIMATELY 200 ACRES WERE
CULTIVATED. PLANTING PERIOD IS DURING NOVEMBER/DECEMBER AND HARVEST
SEASON BETWEEN JANUARY/MARCH. DENSITY OF OPIUM PLANTS PER ACRE
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ESTIMATED AT 20-25,000 AND AVERAGE OF 8 -10 POUNDS PER PLANT RESULTED
IN PROJECTED YIELD OF 25 KILOGRAMS OF RAW OPIUM PER ACRE. ANGA RE-
PORTS THAT THIS OPIUM IS APPROXIMATELY 12 PER CENT MORPHINE CONTENT.
DEA HAS REQUESTED SAMPLE OF OPIUM FOR ANALYSIS.

3. TO DATE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF HEROIN CONVERSION IN EGYPT.

4. OPIUM CULTIVATION IS AN IRRIGATION CROP UTILIZING NILE RIVER WATER. WEATHER AND SOIL TYPE THROUGHOUT NILE VALLEY AND DELTA ARE CONDUCIVE OPIUM CULTIVATION THROUGHOUT YEAR, ALTHOUGH THUS FAR PRACTICE SEEMS BE LIMITED SINGLE CROP PER YEAR. HARVEST IS ACCOMPLISHED BY INCISING THE OPIUM POPPY PODS IN THE EVENING AND SCRAPING THE GUMMY SUBSTANCE FROM THE POD EARLY FOLLOWING MORNING. THIS CAN USUALLY BE DONE THREE TIMES. AFTER THREE SUCH HARVESTS THE POD IS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH INCISION MARKS. THERE IS EVEN EVIDENCE OF SOME INCISION OF PLANT STALK.

5. RE PARA 3 REFTTEL, DEA SAIC HOLM, WHO IS IN CLOSE AND CONSTANT CONTACT WITH ANGA, DOES NOT BELIEVE LATTER HAS ANY DETAILED STUDIES OF THE TYPE REQUESTED. WE WILL NEVERTHELESS MAKE SPECIFIC INQUIRY TO ASCERTAIN WHAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE.

6. ALSO PERTINENT QUERIES CONTAINED REFTTEL IS RECENT STATUS REPORT PREPARED BY SAIC HOLM WHICH SENT TO MATH FALCO, (GFXA8-8015), DATED MARCH 24, 1978. EILTS UNQTE VANCE

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